



NEWS RELEASE

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FRED ROGERS CENTER NAMES SHARAPAN PNC GROW UP GREAT SENIOR FELLOW

LATROBE, PA – Hedda Sharapan, L.H.D., has been named *PNC Grow Up Great Senior Fellow* at the Fred Rogers Center for Early Learning and Children’s Media at Saint Vincent College, it was announced by executive director, Rick Fernandes.

Sharapan joins the Center to work on a special initiative to analyze audio recordings of conversations between Fred Rogers and the late Dr. Margaret McFarland, an associate professor in the department of psychiatry at the University of Pittsburgh, which served to form the themes and child development philosophy behind episodes of *Mister Rogers’ Neighborhood*.

Through this project, Sharapan will evaluate a number of episodes of *Mister Rogers’ Neighborhood* and reverse engineer them back to the original recorded conversations to illustrate how complex early childhood theory evolved into deep and thoughtful programming for young children.

“We believe we have found the one person who can truly grasp this project,” Fernandes commented. “Hedda Sharapan was not only Dr. McFarland’s student at the University of Pittsburgh, she was also Fred’s colleague, having worked with him on the *Neighborhood* series since it began in 1966. Hedda will present her findings at the 2016 *Fred Forward Conference* as part of our renewed commitment to fostering the social and emotional development of young children.”

Sharapan is recognized as a legend in the early learning field. Working to extend Rogers’ legacy, she is a frequent presenter at national conferences on early childhood education.

As the director of early childhood initiatives at The Fred Rogers Company, Sharapan is responsible for communicating Rogers’ philosophy in multiple ways: developing workshops for early childhood educators; working on books, articles and brochures for parents, families and professionals; and speaking around the country to educators, parents, religious, business and community groups. She also consults on the PBS series, *Daniel Tiger’s Neighborhood*.

She earned a master of science degree in child development from the University of Pittsburgh and a bachelor of science degree in psychology from Carnegie Mellon University.

In 2011, Sharapan received the Lifetime Achievement Award from the National Association for Family Child Care in recognition of years of dedicated service to family child care. She authors a professional development e-newsletter that is sent monthly to more than 12,000 subscribers. Sharapan was honored by Saint Vincent College with an honorary doctor of humane letters degree at the December 2013 commencement ceremony where she was the main speaker.

Established at Saint Vincent College in 2003, the Fred Rogers Center enriches the development of current and emerging leaders in the fields of early learning and children's media by supporting the professional advancement and mentoring of the next generations of Fred Rogers through the Early Career Fellows program; educational opportunities for undergraduate Fred Rogers Scholars; research and special collaborations by Rogers Center Senior Fellows; and resources and information on the developmentally appropriate use of media. The Center is the official home of the Fred Rogers Archive as well as a straightforward, understanding and compassionate voice for the healthy social and emotional development of children birth to age 8.

Photo: *Hedda Sharapan*

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